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An instructional guide which develops the skill needed to acquire ideas and to communicate them clearly and effectively in acceptable written English is presented.

An outline of the course includes writing lessons in description, reporting, extended definition, classification and division, comparison and contrast, interpreting experience or the personal essay, literary critique, analysis of a controversial issue, assertion and logic persuasion, and investigation and report. Each of these lessons is given with a list of skills to be taught and examples of topics.

Evaluation of the student involves his improvement in the command of written expression and growth in critical thinking. An example of a student's corrected composition and the methods of correction are given. Recommended composition practices and policies are listed for extended learning experiences. A few sample lessons and a student check list for evaluating and revising his paper are also included.

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EXPERIMENTAL

ADVANCED COMPOSITION
12th GRADE

An Instructional Guide

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LOS ANGELES CITY SCHOOLS
Division of Instructional Services
Curriculum Branch
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FOREWORD

This experimental instructional guide has been prepared to define the specific objectives and learning experiences of the 12th-grade Advanced Composition course required of students who plan to enter college. Its purpose is to develop the ability of students to write with competence on subjects of substance that require accurate observation and clear thinking.

The program of instruction is based on the point of view that composition is both a skills course and an academic discipline, relating reading to writing and the writer with his reader. The guide indicates the problems in writing students will have to face and outlines a structured series of meaningful writing situations to develop the orderly communication of thought.

Logical approaches are suggested and sample topics provided to afford students with suitable practice in rhetorical analysis and development of skills. The guide includes a description of evaluation procedures, together with a section for students on techniques of revision. Provision is made for the use of and retraining in the supporting skills of grammar, sentence structure, and the conventions of writing. Study of vocabulary--the use of words in context--is continuous.

The expository and persuasive writing emphasized in Advanced Composition makes use of the student's experiences in the entire curriculum and demands an awareness of the responsibility of the writer to his reader as well as accurate and forceful thinking.

The committee which developed this guide welcomes suggestions and contributions from those teachers who use it in the classroom. Suggestions should be forwarded to the Curriculum Branch, English Office.

Educational Materials Laboratory
Office of Education
MAY 1965
DEPARTMENT OF
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DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

Meets 12th-grade English requirement. One-semester subject for able students with high marks in English. Demonstrates, through reading and writing, different forms of exposition and various ways of presenting a subject. Develops ability to read closely and analytically--understanding effectiveness of the structure in the light of the ideas presented and the author's purpose, applying valid standards of logic in testing author's conclusions. Increases ability to write expository essays that are clear, cogent, and acceptable, through construction of thesis statement, limiting the subject, logical arrangement of ideas, and adequate development of theme, with particular attention to paragraph organization, sequence, transition. Provides practice in the manipulation of complex sentences where necessary to express complex ideas. Expects adherence to standard English usage in spelling, punctuation, grammar, syntax.

INTRODUCTION

The Advanced Composition course is designed for the student who has reached a stage of maturity in which he can make use of his reading and writing experience to write with a plan and a purpose upon topics of consequence. While this background is steadily growing, the student is called upon to reflect, to perceive aspects, to form opinions or judgments, and to reach conclusions. He will learn the various ways to develop his subject in clear and logical patterns to communicate his purpose to the reader for whom it is planned. The type of writing stressed in the course is exposition, and the emphasis is upon thinking. Accordingly, this guide has been organized to demonstrate that writing requires thinking; that there are essential differences between writing and speaking; that improvement in writing requires training in the writing process, not merely usage exercises; and that writing improves through reading for form and substance.

Writing Requires Thinking

Skill in the use of language is related directly to skill and power in thinking. Clear thinking precedes clear expression, both oral and written.

Writing tests thinking. Each new sentence is a new means of expressing organized thinking. Matters like coordination, subordination, parallelism, and the periodic sentence are not merely matters of form; they are the outward manifestations of the power of thinking itself. Even punctuation and capitalization require thought.

Writing Differs from Speech

Writing is different from speaking. "From the code of speech, the language of formal writing is something of an abstraction, differing in details of grammar and vocabulary and lacking clear indication of the bodily gestures and meaningful qualities of the voice which accompany ordinary conversation. Thus, serious written English . . . requires that the writer know a good deal about structural details, particularly about those in which it differs from the less formal varieties of speech."[1] Formal writing requires greater skill in the use of words, in organization, and in logical thinking than does speaking.

"Written English . . . must be more carefully organized than speech in order to overcome its communicative deficiencies as compared with speech. In speech, we safeguard meaning by the use of intonation, stress, gesture, and voice qualities. In writing, we must deal with our medium in such a way that the meaning cannot possibly be misunderstood. In the absence of an actual hearer capable of interrupting and demanding further explanation, a clear writer is always conscious of 'a reader over his shoulder.'"[2]

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[1]Harold Whitehall, Structural Essentials of English (New York, N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace, 1956), p. 1.

[2]Ibid., p. 2.

Writing Requires Practice

During the course, students will write many compositions, preferably short. Each will be developed with a specific purpose in mind and for a definite reader audience. "The first great difference--and it is fundamental--between doing exercises or paragraphs and writing a whole piece is that the latter requires a larger purpose of the writer."[3]

On the other hand, the long library or term paper, by requiring too much time, very often deprives students of the opportunity to learn the various methods of exposition and to practice sufficiently the skills of clarifying, organizing, and communicating ideas. To learn to write well about something important requires frequent writing of short compositions on topics of substance, together with careful revision and rewriting. If Advanced Composition students are to write essays based on library work, they should have been guided through preparatory stages in the earlier years.[4]

Writers Learn from Reading

Reading is an important resource for the composition student. Following the thought of a skilled writer with critical attention to its logic and method of development helps the beginning writer to learn how to write on his own. Critical reading, like good writing, requires clear thinking. Other skills to be developed by reading literature dealing with ideas and values are the ability to recognize an author's point of view; to note by what means--choice of words, rhetorical devices, organization, and style--he has achieved his purpose; and to evaluate how well he has achieved it. In addition to perceiving how sentences and paragraphs can be developed to convey ideas accurately and effectively, the student learns to recognize such qualities of writing as clearness, vividness, smoothness, and appropriateness. Through selected reading, he becomes acquainted with the possibilities and purposes of structure and form as means of handling ideas.

---

[3]Lou LaBrant, "Writing Is More Than Structure," English Journal (May, 1957), p. 252.

[4]Recommended by College Entrance Examination Board Commission on English.

OBJECTIVES AND SKILLS TO BE DEVELOPED

MAJOR OBJECTIVE

The aim of the course is to develop the ability to acquire ideas and to communicate them clearly and effectively in acceptable written English.

SUPPORTING SKILLS

To achieve this aim, the student, with the guidance of the teacher, must:

1. Read closely and analytically

   a. Analyzing the material objectively and interpreting its meaning
   b. Understanding the effectiveness of the structure in the presentation and development of an idea

2. Think over and discuss what has been read

   a. Determining the thesis, tone, and emphasis
   b. Perceiving the purpose of the selection and how its structure achieves that purpose

3. Construct a plan for writing with a controlling purpose in mind

   a. Analyzing and limiting the topic to determine thesis, tone, and emphasis
   b. Selecting aspects of the topic to conform to purpose
   c. Considering the reader for whom the writing is intended (age, attitude, and background of the reader affect not only wording but also content)
   d. Determining major divisions
   e. Deciding on approach

4. Write the first draft of the composition, based on the plan

   a. Presenting pertinent facts and other evidence to sustain adequately the intended conclusion
   b. Giving particular attention to paragraph organization, sequence, and transition

5. Revise the first draft, thinking it through with the reader in mind

   a. Checking for:

      (1) Adequate support for thesis or conclusion, or both
      (2) Sense of unity
      (3) Proportion of space given to various ideas
      (4) Emphasis
      (5) Logical order and smooth transitions
      (6) Consistency of point of view
      (7) Exactness of word use, appropriate connotative effect
      (8) Clarity of sentence structure (See Item 6. a.)
      (9) Economy and directness of expression

b. Rechecking for:

Adherence to standard English grammar and usage (See Item 6. b.)

6. Develop supporting skills throughout the course by:

a. Practicing the manipulation of complex sentence structures for accurate communication of complex ideas

(1) Using structural clues to avoid ambiguity
(2) Placing modifiers properly to avoid structural ambiguity
- by using subordinate structures
- by using parallel structure
(3) Making weak references plain
(4) Making statements more compact
- by substituting phrase or clause modifiers for separate sentences
(5) Tightening up sentences by cutting out dead phrases, passives
(6) Perceiving the relation of structure to the idea being expressed

b. Adhering to standard English usage in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and syntax

(1) Clarifying relationship of ideas by proper reference, agreement, and word order
(2) Perceiving the relationship of punctuation to grammatical meaning
(3) Checking for spelling and other errors

c. Practicing the listening and study skills that are necessary for dealing with ideas and that facilitate success in college

(1) Taking useful notes from lectures, tapes, television programs, talks, discussions
(2) Making notes from reading
(3) Learning to use the resources of the library
(4) Writing precis
(5) Outlining

OUTLINE OF THE COURSE

Frequent practice, with different topics and different forms, is what helps the student to learn to write; so does sustained effort over a single composition. A developmental series of writing activities performed under the expert guidance of the teacher will, over a period of time, increase the student's skill in written communication.

Certain of the writing lessons listed below require more experience and skill than others. The teacher will therefore make more than one assignment of some of these forms. Although choice is flexible, the teacher should consider arranging the writing lessons in order of increasing difficulty. A possible order is suggested in the following outline. The minimum number of essays for the course is 15.

At the beginning of the semester, teachers may wish to spend one or two weeks reinforcing the skills of paragraph development by providing practice in the use of various methods which include the use of details, examples, enumeration, reasons, and cause and effect.

A. WRITING LESSONS: DESCRIPTION

Problem

Making clear to the reader what is observed
Selecting details and organizing them to produce a desired effect:
- Establishing a point of view
- Establishing a mood
- Making more interesting a person, place, or situation

Aspects of development to discuss with the class

Topic sentence
Use of details
Sequence: spatial, order of importance

Required skills that may need teaching

Careful observation
Formation of a unified impression
Selection of details to convey the desired effect
Relationship of details made clear
Position or point of view of observer consistently maintained

Examples of topics

Object: an old car, an object in a museum, current costumes

Place: setting of a novel or play; an airport; classroom atmosphere

Situation: a mysterious sound; an impressive sight

B. WRITING LESSONS: EXPLANATION OF A PROCESS

Problem

Explaining a sequence which involves several steps, "a systematic series of actions directed to some end"

Aspects of development to discuss with the class

General definition
Concrete details
Chronological or logical order of details
Example or illustration
Cause and effect
Summary

Required skills that may need teaching

Analyzing the type of process
- how something operates (scientific process)
- how something developed or came into being (historical process)
- how some principle works in practice

Establishing sequence
Outlining details

Correlating the generalization or principle of the process with the details of explanation

Examples of topics

Explain a single process, or something you understand very well, such as skin diving, how to grind valves, a stem-Christie in skiing.
Make clear how a machine works (a functional analysis).
Explain the growth of freeways in Los Angeles.
Describe the historical development of some law, institution, or sport (historical growth paper).
Describe how television has affected the American home; the effects of atomic energy on the world (structural analysis).

C. WRITING LESSONS: REPORTING

Problem

Perceiving the significant in making a report on reading, on a meeting, or on an investigation
Being concise, straight to the point
Making communication clear through
- accuracy of writer's perception
- exact statement of facts
- organization of presentation: completness, brevity
- supporting judgment with sound reasons

Aspects of development to discuss with the class

Summary statement
Focus on main impression or result
Details of events, facts, opinions
Differences between "judgment-giving" and "evidence-giving" adjectives
Sequence: time order, order of importance

Required skills that may need teaching

Attention to improve quality of observation
Evaluation of facts or impressions to select the distinguishing details
Development of interest by use of
- the precise word
- characteristic detail

Summarization

Examples of topics

A committee meeting
An interview
Plans made for a program, visit, or excursion
Progress in the development of a new course, policy, or invention
A summary of findings regarding commonly misspelled words, most popular books in the library, one author's point of view, or a similar topic

D. WRITING LESSONS: EXTENDED DEFINITION

Problem

Making clear by orderly explanation
Defining an abstraction in concrete terms
Understanding denotation and connotation of terms used

Aspects of development to discuss with the class

Logical definition, expanded by
- specific examples
- analogy

Limiting by citing the obverse
Summing up

Required skills that may need teaching

Analyzing terms to be defined
Determining purpose of definition
- according to reader's experience, the situation, occasion
- to show importance of or interest in a subject, to clear up a misunderstanding of terms

Defining all important terms exactly
Summing up and returning to general definition established in opening paragraph or sentence

Examples of topics

What is a symbol?
How does one distinguish truth from falsehood? Are there any truths that are true at all times, in all places, for all men?
Define a literary term, such as: poetic justice, irony, metaphor
What is meant by ecology? kinetics? cybernetics?
Define a term often used inaccurately or irresponsibly--for instanc disinterested. Cite examples of how imprecise use weakens communication.

E. WRITING LESSONS: CLASSIFICATION AND DIVISION

Problem

Selecting a basic principle of classification
- chronological
- geographical
- types
- varieties

Dividing the subject according to this principle

Aspects of development to discuss with the class

Classifying and dividing the subject
Comparing and contrasting with other subjects in same class (extended development)
Citing examples

Required skills that may need teaching

Selecting a basic principle for classification, such as
- chronological
- geographical
- type
- use
- purpose

Dividing subject clearly on basis of chosen principle
Avoiding overlapping
- Making divisions mutually exclusive
- Making divisions complete

Examples of topics

Magazine reading
Television commercials
Attitudes toward work
Popular heroes and heroines
Uses of the atom
A program for individual reading
Three problems of space travel

F. WRITING LESSONS: COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

Problem

Perceiving likenesses and differences
Choosing an appropriate development scheme for handling two factors simultaneously

Aspects of development to discuss with the class

Controlling sentence establishing principle of comparison
- concerning objects or subjects in the same class, to establish differences
- concerning objects or subjects in different classes, to establish likenesses

Drawing parallels
Showing contrasts
Citing examples
Restating to form a conclusion

Required skills that may need teaching

Analyzing subject
- likenesses
- differences

Choosing aspects to be developed
Forming a conclusion

Examples of topics

Compare the denotation of a word with its connotation
Contrast a new point of view with one no longer held
Compare "the old folks at home" with the senior citizens in leisure living centers
Contrast two characters in a certain novel
Contrast the treatment of the same theme in two different stories, poems, plays, or novels
Compare a novel with its motion picture adaptation

G. WRITING LESSONS: INTERPRETING EXPERIENCE--THE PERSONAL ESSAY

Problem

Interpreting experience or observation
Making a generalization which expresses a judgment or impression

Aspects of development to discuss with the class

Opening sentence establishing tone
Appropriate details
Illustrations

Required skills that may need teaching

Accurate observation
Perception of unifying idea or impression
Selection of detail, illustration
Choice of words to maintain the personal tone and light touch
Pertinent literary devices, such as satire, irony, use of allusion and metaphor

Examples of topics

What religion means to me
Everyday courage
A fine point of etiquette we could do without
An old-fashioned custom we should revive

Select some family saying that has been used frequently in your home and show how it contributed to character-building or close relationships

H. WRITING LESSONS: LITERARY CRITIQUE OR ANALYSIS

Problem

Conveying an opinion or judgment

Aspects of development to discuss with the class

Comparison and contrast
Analogy
Deductive reasoning
Inductive reasoning

Required skills that may need teaching

Using facts or evidence upon which to base an opinion
Selecting the relevant
Relating conclusions to evidence
Understanding an author's purpose
Recognizing an author's values

Examples of topics

React to quoted material: subtle lines or epigrams from Bacon, Emerson, Pope, Emily Dickinson
Appraise a book, essay, story, poem, or play
Show that though both Turgenev's "Biryuk" and Dostoievski's "The Thief" are about derelicts, the first emphasizes social significance, and the second stresses spiritual significance.
Analyze a poem, showing how the poetic concept is established by words and phrases, imagery and organization (rhyme, meter, stanza form) and stating the effect of the experience on the poet.
Discuss Huck Finn's discoveries about adult hypocrisy.

I. WRITING LESSONS: ANALYSIS OF A CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE

Problem

Learning to search out varied opinions
Learning to avoid
- Extreme opinion
- Overstatement
- Oversimplification

Clarifying a subject by dividing it into its constituent elements
Making clear which element leads to a particular
- Result
- Conclusion
- Course of action

Aspects of development to discuss with the class

Thesis sentence
Classification
Examples
Reasoning
Concluding statement

Required skills that may need teaching

Analyzing which discriminates among elements
Writing thesis sentence establishing purpose
Finding a pattern for clarifying
Using evidence, facts
Examining critically
Reasoning
Perceiving relationships
Making a judgment which follows logically

Examples of topics*

Is preparing for a moon shot a justified expense?
Is censorship of motion pictures for children advisable?
Are insecticides becoming a menace to human life?
Is American television "a wasteland"?
Should couples marry before young man has completed college and secured a good position?

*Choose topics of current interest for which adequate material is available in the school library.

J. WRITING LESSONS: ASSERTION AND LOGICAL PERSUASION

Problem

Using the principles of argumentation
Avoiding fallacies

Aspects of development to discuss with the class

Qualifying the assertion
Justifying the assertion
Deciding key issue
Determining subordinate issues
Defining terms
Making assumptions clear
Presenting evidence
Reasoning from evidence to reach a conclusion

Required skills that may need teaching

Recognizing and defining problem
Considering hypotheses
Forming generalizations
Using relevant evidence
Relating evidence to conclusions
Qualifying conclusions
Distinguishing hypotheses from conclusions
Applying conclusions logically
Avoiding fallacies
Using language appropriate to intent
Outlining, if length of paper makes an outline useful to writer

Examples of topics*

Analyze an essay and write a composition showing author's purpose.
- Stating the issue
- Re-stating strong and weak points which the author has mentioned
- Isolating and discussing author's values
- Bringing own experience to bear on the discussion

Recommend some change in school policy or community policy.
Recommend some change in national policy, using research to support views.
"The Missing Ingredient": Select some situation, institution, or human condition that would be excellent or at least operable except for a missing element. Adapt this idea to political situations or to a personal relationship.

*Choose topics of current interest for which adequate material is available in the school library.

K. WRITING LESSONS: INVESTIGATION AND REPORT*

Problem

Learning to collect and combine information without plagiarism
Forming inferences from collected data

Aspects of development to discuss with the class

Finding the pattern most satisfying to sense of logic to achieve central aim of the composition:
- To explain
- To convince
- To persuade

Required skills that may need teaching

Thinking analytically
- Understanding ideas
- Perceiving aspects
- Comparing ideas or aspects
- Perceiving relationships
- Judging ideas

Organizing effectively
- Limiting the subject
- Excluding the irrelevant
- Outlining

Using library resources
Taking usable notes
Using quotations appropriately
Compiling a bibliography
Using techniques of editing, revising

Examples of topics

Robert Frost's portrayal of New England as you find it in his poetry
A comparison of the ideas of Emerson and Thoreau, as stated or implied in their works
A critical analysis of one of the following:
- A single poet, novelist, short story writer, essayist, biographer, or historian
- English lyricists of the 17th century

The image of America presented in the works of American writers who have won the Nobel prize
A defense of a proposition:
- Milton's poetry reveals the mingling of the Renaissance influence with the Puritan
- Thomas Hardy's novels present life as a losing struggle

*See The Library Paper, p. 45 of this publication.

EVALUATION

Evaluation by the teacher not only helps the student to clarify his writing but also shows him how to evaluate and revise it. By this process, the student develops positive and constructive skills that become a functioning part of his writing competence. Individual conferences are recommended. Instruction in the use of the Student Check List for Revising, page 43, will promote self-evaluation.

MEASURING STUDENT PROGRESS

The degree of improvement in the command of written expression and critical judgment in writing may be indicated, as the course proceeds, by compositions which show:

1. The ability to choose and adhere to some appropriate plan of organization
2. Increasing precision in the use of words
3. Increasing skill in the use of language appropriate to the occasion, purpose, potential readers
4. Increasing maturity in choice of the subject and greater effectiveness in method of handling it
5. Growing tendency to take responsibility for correctness of own use of conventions of written English
6. Growth in critical thinking

EVIDENCES OF GROWTH IN CRITICAL THINKING*

1. Does the student show increasing sensitivity to vague or ambiguous words or phrases and ask what they mean (awful, swell, radical, democratic, etc.)?
2. Does he tend to question the authority for a statement?
3. Does he require evidence in support of any conclusion he is asked to accept?
4. Does he distinguish facts from interpretation of facts or false inference?
5. Does he see relationships between related facts and draw warranted generalizations?
6. Does he collect and organize facts into a coherent unit and show how his conclusion follows logically from those facts?
7. Does he consider negative as well as positive evidence on the question he is discussing?
8. Is he tolerant of new ideas and open to the consideration of new evidence?

*Edward H. Glaser, "An Experiment In the Development of Critical Thinking," Contributions to Education, No. 845 (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1941.)

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN EVALUATING COMPOSITIONS*

A. CRITICAL THINKING

Check for faults in:

1. Assumptions and definitions

   a. Unrecognized assumptions
   b. Too many assumptions
   c. Failure to define terms
   d. Faulty definitions
   e. Shifts in meaning of terms without warning or recognition on the part of the writer
   f. Imputing a single final meaning to a word
   g. Assuming identity of words and referents
   h. Using two-valued judgments inappropriately

2. Nature and use of evidence

   a. Appropriateness of evidence
   b. Adequacy of evidence
      (1) Unsupported assertions
      (2) Qualifications of authority or source
      (3) Importance of evidence used or omitted
      (4) Relationship of supporting evidence to purpose

3. Generalizations

   a. From too few instances
   b. Over-simplification
   c. Failure to qualify appropriately
   d. Stereotyped uses

4. Techniques of problem solving

   a. Recognizing and defining problems
   b. Considering hypotheses
   c. Considering nature and relevance of evidence
   d. Examining relationships of conclusions to evidence
   e. Distinguishing hypotheses from conclusions
   f. Failing to qualify conclusions
   g. Making misapplications of conclusions

---

*Adapted from an outline prepared by the Writing Committee of the workshop sponsored by the Educational Testing Service, Princeton, N. J. "The Committee used this outline as the basis for constructing the writing tests in the new Sequential Tests of Educational Progress (STEP). As a member of that committee, I have been given permission to use the outline in my work with teachers." Alfred H. Grommon, Stanford University.

5. Fallacies

a. Non-sequiturs
b. Attacking motives instead of arguments
c. "After this, therefore on account of this"
d. Arguing in a circle
e. Band wagon, name calling, and other propaganda techniques

B. ORGANIZATION

Evaluate each part:

1. The whole passage

a. Selection (choice of material)
b. Relevance
   (1) Relevance to main point
   (2) Notable omissions
c. Non-repetition
d. Arrangement
e. Cohesion
   (1) Transitions
   (2) Coordination
   (3) Subordination
f. Proportion

2. The paragraph

a. Purpose and plan
b. Main topic
c. Good beginning sentence
d. Logical order, sequence
e. Effective transitions
f. Keeping to the point
g. Uncontradictory ideas
h. Avoiding repetition
i. Effective coordination
j. Effective subordination
k. Concluding sentence

3. The sentence

a. Coordination
b. Subordination
c. Fragments (of idea; see also under "conventions")
d. Run-on sentences
e. Comma faults (loose thinking; see also under "conventions")
f. Logical order (of details)
g. Unity
h. Uncontradictory ideas
i. Economy
j. Word order (idiomatic phrasing)

C. APPROPRIATENESS (to purpose, occasion, audience, etc.)

1. Level of usage
2. Tone (humor, irony, dignity)
3. Diction
4. Structure
5. Tact
6. Idiom

D. EFFECTIVENESS

1. Word choice
2. Emphasis
3. Details*
4. Reasons*
5. Examples*
6. Comparisons*
7. Exactness, clarity
8. Simplicity
9. Economy
10. Variety
11. Imagination
12. Force

E. CONVENTIONS

1. Basic form
   a. Punctuation
   b. Spelling (including contractions and possessives)
   c. Capitalization
   d. Division of words
   e. Abbreviations
2. Syntax
   a. Subject-verb agreement
   b. Pronouns, reference and agreement
   c. Parallel structure
   d. Misplaced modifiers
   e. Dangling construction
   f. Double negative
   g. Sequence of tenses
   h. Uses of "future tense" modes of expression
   i. Expression of conditions, wishes
   j. Fragments
   k. Run-ons and comma faults
   l. Shift in person
3. Word forms
   a. Case of pronouns
   b. Irregular past tense and past participle forms
   c. Confusion of adjectives and adverbs

*Effectiveness of the writer's use of one or more methods of development. This is not a complete list.

RATING COMPOSITIONS*

	CONTENT	ORGANIZATION		DICTION	GRAMMAR, PUNCTUATION, SPELLING
Superior (A-B)	A significant central idea, clearly defined, and supported with concrete, substantial, and consistently relevant detail	1. <u>Rhetorical and Logical Development</u> Theme planned so that it progresses by clearly ordered and necessary stages and developed with originality and consistent attention to proportion and emphasis; paragraphs coherent, unified, and effectively developed; transitions between paragraphs explicit and effective. Thought developed with due regard for logical validity of evidence, illustrations and analogies	2. <u>Sentence Structure</u> Sentences skillfully constructed (unified, coherent, forceful, effectively varied)	Distinctive, fresh, precise, economical, and idiomatic	Clarity and effectiveness of expression promoted by consistent use of standard grammar; appropriate usage, punctuation, and spelling
Average (C)	Central idea apparent but trivial, or trite, or too general; supported with concrete detail, but detail that is occasionally repetitious, irrelevant, or sketchy	Plan and method apparent but not consistently fulfilled; developed with only occasional disproportion or inappropriate emphasis; paragraphs unified, coherent, and usually effective in their development; transitions clear but abrupt, mechanical, or monotonous	Sentences constructed according to the logic of English syntax but lacking distinction	Appropriate, clear, and idiomatic	Clarity and effectiveness of expression weakened by occasional rhetorically ineffective deviations from standard usage, punctuation, and spelling

Unacceptable (D-F)	Central idea lacking or confused, or unsupported by concrete and relevant detail	Plan and purpose not apparent; undeveloped or developed with irrelevance, redundancy, or inconsistency; paragraphs incoherent, not unified, or undeveloped; transitions between paragraphs unclear or ineffective	Sentences not syntactically unified; incoherent	Inappropriate, vague	Communication obscured by frequent deviations from rhetorically effective usage, punctuation, spelling

*Adapted from Joint Statement on Freshman English in College and High School Preparation, by the Department of English of Ball State Teachers College, Indiana State Teachers College, Indiana University, and Purdue University.

C-

MARKING A COMPOSITION*

The Most Desirable Trait of a College Student

The sentences of this ¶ can be combined to eliminate the repetition of "traits" and the succession of short simple sentences.

College students must have many desirable traits. Honesty, morality, punctuality, and intellectuality are characteristic of these traits. The one that stands out in my mind, above all others, is consideration. Without this pleasing factor, one cannot possibly be well-liked in a university, or for that matter, in any other phase of life.

right word?

Punct.

wrong word

Why begin a new ¶ here? You are still discussing the same aspect of your topic - the general importance of consideration.

Consideration for others is the most gratifying characteristic one might acquire. This is the make up of one's personality. It not only shows what one is, but it also shows the kind of family training he or she has had.

Ref?

hyphen

Ref?

wordy

Why many? You discuss only two aspects in this theme.

Consideration is brought out in many aspects of college life. In the dormitory one must consider everyone around her at all times. Before attempting to be boisterous or to get out of line in any way, she must first make sure that she is not disturbing to others. When in the privacy of her room, she must be thoughtful of her roommate. She should not attempt doing anything that might disrupt studying or any other activity that her roommate is trying to accomplish. Talking on the telephone or typing on the typewriter are examples of actions that should be put off until a time when both she and her roommate can plan to do them together.

consistent?

unidiomatic

wordy. Why not just "do"?

redundant

do you accomplish an activity?

not clear. Do you mean to talk on the telephone and write on the same typewriter together?

*Excerpt from Joint Statement on Freshman English in College and High School Preparation, op. cit.

Hallmates deserve consideration as much as a roommate does. One should try to determine when the girls in the hall plan to study, so she can make it a point not to "barge" in on them at the times when they are preoccupied. If this does happen, it is up to the discretion of the individual to leave immediately, perhaps setting a later time when she might come in and stay. Consideration of others' property is another important point with which every co-ed is confronted. Borrowing or "leaching", as it is sometimes called in the dormitory is a habit that should be stopped before it is started. One may think it satisfactory to borrow a scarf or a pair of earrings, but these small items soon lead to the borrowing of skirts, sweaters, and sometimes dresses.

Consideration in the classroom is of great significance, not only to oneself, but to the instructor and the rest of the students as well. Although one may not always agree with a teacher's points of view, he must learn to respect his opinions. This will provide for better relations with the teacher and will be of great help to the class as a whole.

The manner in which one goes about being considerate of others brings out her sincerity, her poise, her friendliness, and her whole personality in general. [Yes, consideration is the most desirable trait of a college student.]

inconsistent

wrong word

not clear. do you imply that the individual might decide not to leave?

Incoherent. Is the co-ed confronted by the consideration?

Punct

right word?

so items lead?

monotonous transitions. You begin almost every ¶ with the same word.

now you switch from "she" to "he."

and now you return to the feminine gender.

This style is more appropriate to a radio or television commercial.

COMMENT ON FOREGOING COMPOSITION

The central idea of this theme, although adequately defined, is superficial and immature. Consideration is not a trait which necessarily distinguishes college students from other young men and women, nor is it the trait most desirable in a college student. Further, the shifts from "one" to "she" to "he" and to "her" suggest that the writer is uncertain about whom and to whom she is writing; sometimes she speaks of and to all college students and sometimes of and to only co-eds.

The plan of the theme is adequate, but it is incompletely realized. After stating her topic clearly enough in the first two paragraphs, the writer sets out to illustrate and support it through concrete examples. But the monotonous transitions between paragraphs fail to indicate why they follow in the order they do: why, for example, is consideration in the classroom discussed last? Had the writer established relationships between topics, it might have been possible for her to discuss her ideas in more fully developed paragraphs; paragraphs 3 and 4, for example, both of which concern the etiquette of dormitory life, might have been combined. The writer should also revise several sentences to eliminate wordiness and improve coherence. The simple and often repetitious structure of many sentences is childish, and the diction of the theme is occasionally imprecise or unidiomatic.

Because of these weaknesses in paragraphing, sentence structure, and diction, the theme would have deserved a grade of C even if its central idea had been more significant. But a thorough revision of the theme must begin with the topic itself, for only when the writer has considered and discussed more meaningful aspects of her subject will her undoubted ability to define an idea and plan a theme produce superior writing.

PRACTICES

FOR

EXTENDING LEARNING EXPERIENCES

COMPOSITION PRACTICES AND POLICIES

Beginning the Course

Suggested Topics for a Sequence of Writing Lessons

Student Check List for Evaluating and Revising His Paper

The Library Paper

The Subject A Examination

Subject A Examination Topics

Essay Writing in Senior High School

COMPOSITION PRACTICES AND POLICIES*

RECOMMENDED	DUBIOUS
. Giving students as much directed practice as possible in writing frequent paragraphs and weekly themes	Merely preparing students to pass college placement tests by giving them drill (workbook fashion) on grammar, spelling, punctuation, and similar elements of writing, rather than giving them practice in writing
. Careful reading and constructive criticism of the students' papers, especially with attention to content, organization, and language. Attention to logical sense of what students say	Reading and correction that stress chiefly the mechanical and minor aspects of writing
. Final responsibility assumed by teacher on correcting and evaluating students' papers	The evaluation of students' papers by other students as a regular substitute for correcting and final evaluating by the teacher, instead of as an occasional device to stimulate students
. A positive and constructive attitude toward writing problems; emphasis on material worth writing about and rhetorically effective ways of doing so	A negative and authoritarian attitude toward language: "This is what you must not do."
. Considerable rewriting (thorough and completed reworking of papers) as well as minor revision and mere correction of mechanical and other errors	No rewriting or revision or only minor revision and correction of mechanical and other errors
. Recognition that all teachers and the parents share the responsibility of the English teacher for the student's attitude toward skill in using language	Holding the English teacher solely responsible for the spoken and written English of students

*Adapted from Joint Statement on Freshman English in College and High School Preparation, op. cit.

	RECOMMENDED	DUBIOUS
7.	Wide use of the essay examination and written reports in all subjects	Excessive use of the objective type of examination and of oral reports
8.	Analytic writing requiring students to do their own thinking	Assignments easily satisfied by the students' merely copying from pages in texts and reference books
9.	Concurrent and interlocking study of literature and composition, and of composition and language, constantly relating language and literature to each other	Rigid separation of literature and composition or composition and grammar, devoting a different period of the year to each and treating each in isolation; excessive concern with literature at the expense of work in writing
10.	Writing compositions generally based on works of excellent quality, or on linguistic problems of comparable seriousness	Assignment of 2000-5000 work unrestricted (free choice) "research" papers or intensive drilling in technicalities of documentation (footnotes, bibliography)
11.	Careful and unhurried assignment of theme topics, with suggestions as to means of analyzing and organizing pertinent material; assignment of topics sufficiently mature and important to require critical and judicious thinking (concerning problems to be solved, propositions to be analyzed and supported or attacked)	Hurried and careless assignment of topic for next theme as dismissal bell is ringing; assignment of topics which require no critical or analytical thinking and invite simple narrative development

BEGINNING THE COURSE

Sample Lessons

Several types of assignments may be used to acquaint the class with the nature of the course and its requirements. The examples given below indicate approaches some teachers have found successful. In Approach Number I, students read and analyze. In Approach Number II, they write a composition, the first challenging assignment, which usually reveals basic weaknesses. In either case, the first set of papers will help the teacher plan the course.

APPROACH NUMBER I: Comparing two compositions: one poorly written, one well-written

Purpose: To help students to

Recognize good writing
Perceive what makes writing weak, ineffective
Learn what is expected of them in this course

Procedure:

1. Hand out copies of a poorly written essay--one marked "unsatisfactory" from the Subject A pamphlet will do. Do not reveal its rating. Students read it and comment on its idea, structure, etc. Since they are told it was written by a college student, but not that it was unacceptable, they usually find it quite acceptable, "a good paper."

2. Next, distribute copies of a well-written essay on the same subject. Upon reading it, students usually perceive immediately its superior quality. To make clear the reason, analyze its thought content and structure. Point out such features as:

   Thesis sentence
   Enumerating sentence
   Sentences of development and support
   Method of development: comparison, illustration, analogy, etc.
   Transitional devices
   Conclusion reached or point made

3. Now ask students to

   Reread the first composition
   Try to outline it
   Discover what is wrong with it

   Ask, "How would you revise it?"

4. Summary activity

Ask students to make, from this experience, two check lists for use in revising their compositions: number one--what to avoid; number two--what to do. The aim of this activity is to discover what students know about writing and to show them what they need to learn, presenting an overview of the course.

What to Avoid (Characteristics of Poor Writing)	What to Do (Principles of Effective Communication)
Fuzziness of communication caused by use of - vague words - meaningless words - wrong words	Use words with precision and accuracy
Emptiness of meaning caused by use of - jargon - "big," pretentious words	Express meaning clearly
Too many cliches, pat expressions, locutions	Use vocabulary adequate to ideas
Hasty generalizations	Think as you write
Ambiguous constructions--dangling participles, weak references	Communicate: show concern for reader
The deadly passive	Avoid artificial language
Abstract nouns and adjectives for verbs	
Redundancy of expression: "dead" phrases, wordiness	
Elliptical expressions	Avoid short cuts of expression
Poor organization	Organize in a way that will make communication effective
Bringing up points and letting them hang unresolved	

(Refer to Student Check List for Evaluating and Revising His Paper, page 43.)

APPROACH NUMBER II: Writing a preliminary composition

Purpose: To help students to

Discover their abilities and needs
Set a design for learning by perceiving their own needs in writing

Procedure:

1. Assign a rather difficult topic; for example, hand out copies of an old Subject A examination, ask students to select one of the topics and write a short composition.

   Or assign a rather general subject, such as "Football," to see what techniques students know how to use in dealing with it.

2. Teacher reads the papers, makes notes for discussion:

   Organization:
   - limiting the topic
   - methods of development: example, comparison, details, etc.

   Controlling sentence: something to say

   Importance of purpose

   Other faults may be reserved for future study:

   Redundancy
   Long words, complicated sentences
   Generalizations
   Illogical reasoning

3. Conduct a discussion with the class:

   Emphasize what was well done.
   Point out how to improve.
   Read an example of a well-written essay. Analyze to point out effective techniques.
   Return student papers, not marked, for student marking toward end of semester.
   Use sentences from student themes for practice, to improve clarity, remove ambiguity, redundancy, etc.

4. Summary activity

   Ask each student to make a check list of his own needs and aims to improve his writing.

ADVANCED COMPOSITION

SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR A SEQUENCE OF WRITING LESSONS

SAMPLE ORGANIZATION #1

Type	Focus	Suggested Topics
1. Personal essay	Organizing parts in logical sequence; gaining confidence	The Real Me My Dilemma Influences in My Life
2. Extended definition of an abstract word	Making abstractions concrete--making clear the necessary relationship between words and reality	What Is Patriotism? What Is a Beautiful Painting What Is Communism? What Is Democracy? What Does 'Practical' Mean?
3. Essay in division	Employing systematic analysis--learning to subdivide a topic	Five Types of Teachers Factions in Our Student Body Four Varieties of Leadership Four Types of Tourists
4. Essay in illustration (or example)	Achieving concreteness--use of a unifying thesis	The Small Town Today The Automated Man The Finality of Atomic War
5. Essay in comparison and contrast	Handling two factors simultaneously--making parts lead up to a conclusion or choice	The Liberal and the Conservative Pleasure vs. Duty Country Life and City Life
6. The propaganda essay	Recognition of counterfeit proof. Recognition of emotional appeals	Milk Is Poison Smog Is Beneficial Hitler Was a Great Man
7. The essay in logical persuasion	To learn methods of adequate support	Why I Support Candidate _____ Why I Am for (or against) _____
8. Essay in analysis of a controversial issue	To learn to search out varied opinions; to learn to avoid extreme opinion and over-statement	Arms Control Now? Eighteen-Year-Old Voters? Is Abstract Art Worthless?

	Type	Focus	Suggested Topics
9.	The reaction essay (to a painting, poem, etc.)	To learn to make subjective judgments judiciously; to learn to judge things in their own terms	My Reaction to Van Gogh's "Bridge at Arles" What I Think of . . .
10.	Research essay	To learn to collect and combine information without plagiarizing; bibliography; forming inferences from facts	What Evidence Supports the Continental Drift Theory? What Inferences Can Be Drawn from Recent Studies of the Size of the Universe?
11.) 12.)	Research paper	Organization, footnoting, use of the library	What Were the Causes of the Decline of the Minoan Culture? Was Kandinsky a Great Artist? What Automatic or Repeating Weapons Were Used and with What Effect in the American Civil War?
13.	Book evaluation	Methods of reporting on reading; summary writing; objective criticism	Shakespeare's Henry IV, Part I Book II of Gulliver's Travels Defoe's Journal of the Plague Years, etc.
14.	The essay in personal values	Organization of ideas, investigation of personal values	How I Define Success How to Know a Good Man When You See One What Is a True Elite?
15.	Final essay	Ability to write an acceptable essay in class within a given time limit	See U. of C. Subject A essay topics

--Contributed by Bernard Goodmanson, Reseda High School

ADVANCED COMPOSITION

SAMPLE ORGANIZATION #2

	Type	Focus	Suggested Topics
1.	Description of a place	Sufficient specific and colorful sensory detail to create an impression or suggest a mood indicated in a topic sentence	The Lake The Camp The Oak Tree The Church Bargain Counter From the Top of City Hall
2.	Description of a character	Exact and sufficient detail to create an impression or suggest a personality	Grandfather The Man on the Corner The Minister The Huckster The Cobbler The Chef
3.	Definition and explanation	Expanding a definition and giving an interpretation of the meaning	Tornado Avalanche Glacier Geyser Courage Sophistication Integrity Superstition Tolerance Gentleman An Educated Person Greatness Symbols
4.	Classification and division	Logical division into categories according to identifying factors	Mentally Retarded Strata of Society Propaganda Arts or Artists Literary Types Literary Styles Types of Accidents Modes of Architecture
5.	Comparison and contrast	Observing likenesses and differences	A Television Program vs. the Original Book or Play Introvert and Extrovert Pride and Vanity Courage and Foolhardiness Loyalty and Sentimentality Sorrow and Grief Youth and Age Knowledge and Wisdom

SAMPLE ORGANIZATION #2

Type	Focus	Suggested Topics
		Farm Life and City Life Courtesy and Gentility Classical and Popular Music Modern and Classic Detective and Mystery Stories Sunrise and Sunset
6. Cause and effect	To observe and express relationships clearly	Causes for the Growth of Suburbs Causes of Juvenile Delinquency Why an Increase in the Sale of Books? Why a Decrease in Movie Attendance? Why an Increase in College Enrollment? The Effects of Family Ties The Effects of Strikes The Effects of Good Habits The Effects of Prejudice The Effects of Overemphasis on Science The Storm Caught Us Unaware All the Buses Stopped without Warning at Five Today I Was Driving Too Fast When I Saw the Hay Truck
7. Assertion and persuasion	Reasoning from evidence to reach a logical conclusion	Justify one semester of art for graduation Justify one semester of music for graduation Justify employing women in the business world Motion Pictures Often Give a Twisted Version of Life Not Everyone Should Go to College Individuality Is More Important than Current Fashion Recommend some change in national policy, using research to support your views

ADVANCED COMPOSITION

	Type	Focus	Suggested Topics
8.	Literary analysis	To recognize significant ideas and the methods used to develop them. To analyze an author's work in order to discover the author's purpose	Analysis of a book, play, long poem, or an essay Author's use of setting, character, and action to support his theme The objectivity of the writer Show how Frost uses description to express his philosophical idea: "A poem begins in delight and ends in wisdom."
9.	Library paper	To collect, organize, and present information without plagiarizing and to draw conclusions	The Ant as an Engineer New England as Presented in the Poetry of Robert Frost Christian Influences in Beowulf The Influence of _____ on Modern Art Drama in England During the Middle Ages Wordsworth as a Pantheist Early Humanists in England
10.	Personal essay	To express an individual emotion, impression, or feeling in a style appropriate to the subject	Dates - Steady and Unsteady I Like to Walk Animals Like Me Secrets Are To Be Told Buttons on Men's Coats The Sea in English Poetry The Social Climber On Following the Crowd My Little Sister On Being an Outsider On Being Average On Being an Apartment Dweller The Disappearance of Chivalry On Tipping One's Hat Family Fun I Like to Waste Time Gifts On Being Myself What Religion Means to Me Our Gadget Civilization The Drugless Drugstore American Speech Mannerisms

--Contributed by Freda S. Plummer, Westchester High School

SAMPLE ORGANIZATION #3

Detailed directions, discussion, aid, examples, and many suggested topics will introduce each assignment.

"The more a man writes, the more he can write." --William Hazlitt.

"Writing, to be good, requires a lively intelligence and sympathy, a well-stored mind, and a feeling heart. It must be sincere, lucid, and vivacious." --Sir Walter Raleigh, On Writing and Writers.

1. Write a 500-word essay (to reveal basic strengths, weaknesses, and needs). (For example, on some phase of college football. Later teacher reads to class "How to Say Nothing in Five Hundred Words" by Paul Roberts in A Reading Approach to College Writing, edited by Cox and Foote.)

2. Write paragraphs in which you develop the topic sentence by giving examples and details.
("Certain types of people really bore me." "Reading has many rewards." "Being young has certain disadvantages.")

3. Write about one particular object: First, describe it objectively. Second, write about it subjectively.
(A patch of dirt, a clock, a piece of chalk, a book, a tree)

4. Describe a scene where there is action. Limit the time and place, and make one impression. Appeal to the senses; use verbs of action and specific concrete nouns. No adjectives or adverbs! Don't comment or explain. Show!
(A scene that is mysterious or frightening; a scene that is peaceful and beautiful; a scene that is of one predominant color; a haunted house; the house where you were born)

5. Write paragraphs in which you develop and support the topic sentence by giving reasons with examples and specific details.
("Money isn't everything." "I like walking in the rain." "My favorite character in fiction is _____." "_____ is a book all teachers should read." "Every intelligent person should _____.")

6. Write two papers of extended definition, using the various methods of exposition:
   a. Something concrete
      (Clouds, a volcano, electricity, helicopter, radiation)
   b. Something abstract
      (Culture, an educated person, a sense of humor, success in life, love, happiness, honor, a sense of values)

VANCED COMPOSITION

- Write two papers developed by comparison and contrast:
  a. Two concrete objects
     (A worm and a snake, a lizard and a dinosaur, a mouse and a bat, two streets, me in my dreams and me in reality)
  b. Two abstract topics
     (Propaganda and literature; wit and humor; living and existing; the two sides of man--"sublimity and slime"; a comic book classic and the original classic; Bacon's and Emerson's essays on "Friendship"; portraits by Rembrandt and Picasso; two sonnets on the same topic)

Write an informative essay on a topic needing research--a difficult process or scientific phenomenon. Use the different methods of exposition. Simplify and clarify so that a bright 7-year-old child will understand your explanation. (For example: sun spots; uranium; jet propulsion; Telestar.)

Write two essays concerning the novel you have just read.
(The theme and how it is developed and exemplified; the mistakes I thought _____ made; _____'s sense of values; why I admire _____; how the book affected me; problems faced by the protagonist; problems which are still faced today)

Write a humorous monologue or dialogue illustrating ten of the "fallacies of thinking." (The teacher reads aloud to the class beforehand Max Schulman's "Love Is a Fallacy." The class, of course, has been studying "logical fallacies.")
(A young person asks a parent for money, new clothes, or _____; a salesman tries to sell something to naive, helpless you.)

Write a paper explaining the meaning of a rather well-known but vague term or expression, taken from a list given you by the teacher. Clarify by using many methods of exposition.
(For instance, the dignity of man; art improves upon nature; art for art's sake; does the end justify the means?)

Write a paper of argumentation--an editorial or a letter to a friend, persuading him to do or not to do something drastic.
(For example, to join the Peace Corps, not to join the circus, to travel to England with you this summer and go about on bikes)

Write a serious paper of argumentation dealing with an issue vital today.

Write a personal essay on a topic of your choice--an essay composed of careful observations, your reactions, feelings, then generalizations and conclusions about this topic. Be interesting and original! Show what you remember about concreteness, style, etc.
(Suggestions: shadows, trees, bus drivers, librarians, boys' shoes, excuses, weeds, roses, notebooks, walks, eyes)

15. Write a personal essay about a "moment of illumination" or the "moment of truth." Combine methods of description, narration, and exposition. (How the pattern of your conduct was suddenly changed by _____; your sudden realization about a certain way of life, a person, the emptiness of certain pleasures, or false values)

16. Write an evaluation and criticism of your writing assignment #1. Perhaps rewrite that essay.

17. Write an essay explaining and evaluating your three "best quotations to live by"--quotations wise and thought-provoking; nothing obvious or trite!

18. Write one or more 500-word essays on topics you choose from recent Subject A lists of essay topics.

--Contributed by Jane La Ferriere, Los Angeles High School

SAMPLE ORGANIZATION #4

	Type	Problem	Suggested Topics
1.	Description	To make clear to the reader what has been carefully observed by the writer	First Period, Five Minutes Before the Bell A Crowd at a Football Game
2.	Explanation of a process	To explain a sequence involving several issues	How to Work Out a Study Schedule How to Prepare and Serve a Company Dinner How to Write a Composition
3.	Reporting	To perceive what is significant in reporting an event	New Year's Morning at the Rose Parade The Homecoming Game Our High School Prom The Final Play-Off at Dodger Stadium
4.	Extended definition	To define and clarify through orderly explanation an abstraction in concrete terms	What Is Wisdom? What Is Meant by Maturity? What Is Intelligence?
5.	Classification and division	To decide on a basic principle of classification, i.e., varieties, types	Solutions to the Problem of Teen-age Crime The Various Roles of the Church in the Community
6.	Comparison and contrast	To choose the appropriate developmental scheme for handling two factors simultaneously	Contrast two characters in Return of the Native The Small College vs. the Large University Compare a book with its movie version Advantages and Disadvantages of Speech and Writing
7.	Interpreting experience: The personal essay	To evaluate an observation or experience	I Didn't Have a Cent Making Failure Count The Straw That Broke the Camel's Back

	Type	Problem	Suggested Topics
8.	Literary critique	To convey an opinion or judgment	Criticize an article from Atlantic or Literary Cavalcade Critical analysis of Pygmalion, Ethan Frome, The Secret Sharer
9.	Analysis of a controversial issue	To search out varied opinions; to avoid oversimplification and generalizations	Medicare--Friend or Foe? Unilateral Disarmament--Good or Bad? Fraternities--Fellowship or Snobbishness
10.	Assertion and logical persuasion	To use principles of argumentation (inductive or deductive reasoning)	Good Scholarship Pays Big Dividends Cigarettes are a Major Cause of Lung Cancer Early Marriages Often Lead to Divorce
11.	Library paper	To collect, combine, and organize several source materials without plagiarizing; to learn outlining, bibliography, and footnoting techniques	Extra-Sensory Perception Modern American Jazz The Philosophy of Thomas Hardy Psychosomatic Illness Computers--Servants of Man
12.	Precis	To summarize concisely the essential content and emphasis of the original	"Of Studies"--Bacon "The Educated Man"--Newman "Self Reliance"--Emerson
13.	Paragraphs illustrating levels of usage: formal, informal, and substandard	To emphasize the functional varieties of English in terms of diction, structure, and tone	An Important Political Issue is Discussed: a. In formal debate on television b. In conversation between two college students c. In conversation between two uneducated hoboes

ADVANCED COMPOSITION

	Type	Problem	Suggested Topics
14.	Interpreting a quotation or a selection of poetry: the extended metaphor	To search out meanings; to explain, expand, or paraphrase in clear, simple language	"All the World's a Stage" "The Child is Father of the Man" Milton's Sonnet "On His Blindness" Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" "To Develop Your Own Character, You Must Know Your Country's Character"
15.	Subject A practice composition	To write a 500-word essay in class within certain time limits	Choose a topic from former Subject A examinations

--Contributed by Dorothy B. Willets, Verdugo Hills High School

STUDENT CHECK LIST FOR EVALUATING AND REVISING HIS PAPER*

Every writer has a reader in mind as he revises what he has written. He must make sure that he has said what he meant to say--clearly, persuasively, interestingly.

Revision is an act of criticism. To be a critical reader of your own writing, you must be objective. If you can wait a day or two before revising your first draft, you may be more able to examine it from a reader's point of view.

THE PROCESS OF REVISION

Step I: Read the essay rapidly through for total effect.

A. <u>The central idea</u>

Is it clearly established at the beginning? _____
Is it always in mind as you read through? _____
If not, check for
- relevance of material where idea seems to be lost
- repetitions
- subordination of material to give emphatic positions to your main idea

B. <u>The expected progression of ideas: clear organization</u>

Is there a natural and easy flow of ideas? _____
If not, check for
- logical development, by outlining the essay
- deficiencies in transitional statements

Rearrange to make development clear

C. <u>The conclusion</u>

Have you answered in the conclusion the question asked in the introduction? _____
Or does essay merely stop? _____
Or have you gone beyond the point of decision, adding unnecessary elements? _____

Step II: Having read the essay as a whole, check each paragraph for the following:

A. Is there a unifying idea around which each paragraph is developed? _____
Is it given sufficient emphasis? _____
If the idea is a subordinate point in your discussion, have you indicated its subordinate value? _____

*See <u>Evaluation</u>, pp. 16ff; also <u>Beginning the Course</u>, p. 29.

B. Does the support material clearly support the key idea of the paragraph? _____
Is there sufficient material? _____
Have you offered proof? _____

Step III: Check your sentences for structure and style.

A. Have you varied your sentence structures, avoiding monotonous prose? _____
B. Does your writing seem choppy? _____
(If it does, try combining some short, simple sentences, using subordinate or coordinate clauses.)
C. Are there any overloaded sentences? _____
(If so, break them up.)
D. Are there any incomplete sentences? _____
E. Are pronoun references clear? _____
F. Are the elements of a parallel construction really parallel? _____
G. Do beginning participial phrases modify the subject? _____
H. Does a sentence read awkwardly? _____
(Rearrange it.)

Step IV: Read the essay aloud to someone who has not seen it, if possible. Ask him to stop you whenever he is disturbed by some indecision in the writing, such as

- main idea and its development _____
- paragraph unity, coherence, and completeness _____
- effectiveness of sentences _____
- diction, precise use of words _____

As you read, check for

- words that contribute little or nothing to your statement _____
- consistent diction _____
- appropriate usage _____
- precise wording, avoiding vagueness or ambiguity _____
- spelling _____
- subject-verb agreement _____
- misplaced modifiers _____
- trite language _____

Step V: Make a final review of punctuation and capitalization.

Is any of the punctuation non-functioning? _____
Have you underlined (italicized) all titles of books, magazines, works of art? _____
Are all capitals necessary? _____
Are words divided at the end of a line properly? _____
(Check with dictionary.)

THE LIBRARY PAPER

Limitation on Length and Time

Experience has indicated that the library or research paper should not aggrandize the time, as it often has, in the advanced composition course, where the chief emphasis is upon learning to handle various problems of organization. Reasons college professors and experienced teachers give are:

- The mechanics of the research paper (documentation, footnotes, etc.) can be taught in a relatively brief period*
- Few secondary students are mature enough to do real research anyway*
- The best training for the writing of longer college and professional papers begins with the writing and revising of smaller papers on limited and manageable subjects**
- In writing a small paper one faces the same problems one must solve in the preparation of a larger one**

Assigning a Paper Based on Reading (500-1000-Words)

A. Teacher must consider:

1. Availability of materials

    - Pre-plan with school librarian to learn what resource materials the library contains
    - Help students to choose topics which
        - do not all require everyone to use the same materials, e.g., all on one author, or too many on one subject
        - are not too difficult to develop satisfactorily from the resources at hand, e.g., avoid topics like "Prevalence of Tropical Diseases in Africa"

2. Reasonable difficulty of achievement

    - Help students to choose a subject which they can deal with successfully
        - within their ability to grasp
        - interesting to them and the class
        - capable of being narrowed to a specific aspect, for which source material is available
    - Expect revision after much reading
        - redefinition of topic
        - rewriting of thesis statement: hypothesis or question to be answered
        - revision of skeleton outline

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*Professor Edward B. Irving, Jr., at the Yale Conference on the Teaching of English, 1959.

**Jones, Everett L., and Clarence Greenwood, An Approach to College Writing. New York: Holt, 1957. p. 5.

B. Preliminary practice lessons are necessary

1. Develop ability to do critical thinking (in previous writing assignments)

- Structuring problems correctly in order to solve them (organization and logical thinking)
- Discovering a principle of generalization through an inductive process
  - common properties: a class
  - seeing connections: relationships
  - causes and effects: systems
- Drawing a conclusion from given information
  - correlate information or ideas
  - show relationships
  - derive implications

2. Develop skills in shorter lessons

- Paraphrasing as a preparation for taking notes, avoiding plagiarism
- Documenting a preliminary outline without writing the whole paper, using
  - appropriate quotations
  - correct footnotes
  - correctly cited bibliography (short, but citing three types of references, as book, magazine, newspaper or pamphlet)
- Writing thesis statement, making skeleton outline
- Note-taking according to a regular system

C. Motivate by showing purpose and nature of assignment

1. Value of the experience of accounting for all facts and assertions in a paper
   - To develop an argument or prove an hypothesis
   - To explain an issue
   - To develop an opinion
   - To reach a conclusion

2. Qualities the writer develops
   - Thoroughness in discovering relevant material
   - Critical evaluation of accuracy, authenticity, recency of evidence or facts
   - Objectivity in presenting the material
     - distinguish clearly between fact and opinion, inference and conclusion
   - Accuracy in citing sources

3. Abilities the writer develops
   - To recognize a problem
   - To use facts as a basis for forming a judgment
   - To go beyond the facts to the significance of the facts
   - To see that a fact means nothing unless compared

D. Give suggestions to students to help with the process (after preliminary discussion and choice of subjects, narrowing of topic, etc.)

1. Read and take notes

2. Make a preliminary writing plan and think about it:

   - What will the reader want to know?
   - What will be your point of view or purpose?
   - What will be your main idea or conclusion?
   - What are the hows and whys, implications, uses, results?

3. Organize material according to your thinking

   - Sorting material into logical divisions
     Number them 1, 2, 3, etc.
   - Keeping main thoughts down to a few, to be accurate and thorough
   - Preparing a heading for each group
   - Relating and grouping ideas
   - Proportioning ideas--all will not be of equal importance
     Assign space to each point according to its importance to the purpose and the controlling idea
   - Discarding any material that is unimportant, irrelevant, or out of proportion
   - Adding new material, if necessary, should a part prove to be particularly important
   - Determining an interesting approach, not too long
   - Deciding on effective concluding remarks

4. Revise and rework the material until you have an outline

   - Expressing the point of view or purpose
   - Developing the idea
   - Supporting the idea with facts or arguments
     - references to authorities
     - statistics, facts, events
     - quotations

5. Write first draft

6. Make all revisions
   Proofread and submit to class or teacher for comment

7. Rewrite according to suggestions, examining

   - Organization
   - Sentence structure
   - Word choice

8. Make a neat copy, including latest revisions

THE SUBJECT A EXAMINATION

According to the Regulations of the Academic Senate of the University of California, "all undergraduate entrants. . . shall be required at the time of their first registration to take an examination, known as the examination in Subject A, designed to test their ability to write English without gross errors."

The Subject A examination is therefore primarily a test in composition. It is not a test of knowledge of literature, of speech, or of depth of reading. It is not a test of knowledge of grammatical terms. It is a test of ability to write reasonably well-organized English. "The committee desires to discover how well the student habitually expresses himself, not how well he has been coached in certain types of exercises."* Students are given a list of fourteen topics, ranging from those on family life and school problems to those on current affairs, and asked to write an essay about five hundred words in length. If the paper is too short--three hundred words or less--it is failed.

The chief requirement is that the student have something to say and that he have sufficient command of the techniques of written expression to make his meaning clear to the reader. Supporting definite opinions with concrete details or logical arguments, reaching reasoned conclusions that follow from facts logically presented, the writer may succeed in meeting the latter half of the requirement. Thoughtful reading and personal experience should supply the raw material for writing. The bulletin of the committee states: "Persons who have read little and thought less will find the writing of an acceptable essay somewhat beyond their powers."

The grading of the Subject A papers is objective and the standards are reasonable. A reader first reads the paper rapidly to see whether the student has written on the assigned topic and has been logical in his thinking. He is also on the lookout for the student who has no ideas on the subject and has therefore attempted to use an old theme written in high school. The purpose of the second reading is to identify gross errors. A gross error is not a disputable use of punctuation. It is a conspicuous error which does violence to the writer's meaning or obscures thought by making it impossible for the meaning to be understood. Examples are: improper grouping of material; inaccurate use of words; errors in the reference of pronouns; illogical shifts in number, person, or tense; the lack of proper punctuation; misplaced or dangling modifiers; general incoherence; or errors in the use of parallel structure.

The student is not penalized for split infinitives nor for the use of "is because," objectionable as the latter is to most people. But if he has misspelled more than one per cent of his words or has six or more gross errors in sentence structure, he is failed.

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*Quoted from a speech by Everett L. Jones, Supervisor of Subject A Instruction, University of California at Los Angeles.

SUBJECT A EXAMINATION TOPICS

Choose one of the following topics and treat it in an essay of not less than 500 words. Give your essay an appropriate title. Write in ink.

1. Psychologists say that children of divorced parents frequently have peculiar difficulties in adjusting to adult life and marriage. What special problems do they face?

2. If you have had the opportunity to observe any strange or unusual customs, either in this country or abroad, tell what you know about the origin of one of them. What is its meaning to its participants?

3. "For a woman doctor to abandon practice after she marries is for her to cheat society of thousands of dollars it has invested in her training." Discuss this statement.

4. Relatively few students participate in interscholastic athletics; therefore interscholastic athletics should be abolished in favor of intramural sports which would benefit all students. Attack or defend this point of view.

5. Which president of the United States has had the most far-reaching influence upon the policies and events of his time? Give specific reasons for your choice.

6. Did your high school have a school hero or heroine? If so, what had he or she done to earn the respect of the school?

7. Each of the following terms has been applied to the age we live in: The Age of Advertising, The Age of Indecision, The Age of Conformity. Choose the one term which you think is most appropriate and explain why.

8. Discuss the selection, purchase and care of some piece of equipment connected with your hobby, such as a gun, skis, lathe, sewing machine, short-wave set, etc.

9. What do you consider the most important improvement (or improvements) in farming methods or livestock raising in the last ten years? Explain the improvement and its importance.

10. "There is an all-or-nothing mentality among us which hungers for pure and clear ideas, untouched by complication. . . I am inclined to call it the either-or mentality." --William F. Lynch, S. J.

    In what departments of American life have you observed the "either-or" mentality at work? When should we condemn such a way of thinking? When approve?

ESSAY WRITING IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL*

A PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SKILL IN EXPOSITION

Exposition, in the broadest sense, is that form of writing required by college entrance examinations, business communications, and professional and industrial reports. An expository paper "presents and interprets information." To achieve its purpose it may draw upon the techniques of description, narration, or persuasion. Since skill in this form of writing is a basic need in today's world, systematic and continuous attention should be given to its development. The sequence of lessons indicated in the chart on the following page is not intended to supplant other forms of writing currently used in the English classroom (such as precis writing, essay-type tests, journals, "impromptu" compositions, and experiments with literary forms--to name a few) but rather to focus attention upon expository writing in order to insure sufficient developmental teaching of this form throughout the high school years.

*Essay Writing in Senior High School (Los Angeles City Schools: Division of Instructional Services, 1961).

ADVANCED COMPOSITION AND SENIOR COMPOSITION DATA*

Minimum number of lessons in essay writing	Fifteen lessons
Length of composition	Beginning with a review of paragraph building and moving gradually into 500-word essays
Timing	Approximately one per week, allowing for opening and closing of semester, holidays, etc.
Sources of topics and ideas for student writing	Current affairs on local, state, national, and international level Analysis of mature reading materials Developments in science, psychology, sociology, etc., according to individual interests
Writing skills to be taught	A re-inforcement of all writing skills taught in previous semesters, in addition to Precise diction Appropriate levels of usage Careful definitions of terms Qualifying of conclusions

Suggested evaluation:
25% ideas
25% paragraphing and organization
25% sentence structure
25% conventions of writing (spelling, capitals, punctuation, division of words, etc.)

*Op. cit.

NOTES ON ESSAY WRITING*

The Composition Lesson

The minimum number of composition lessons suggested in the chart is based upon the idea that a lesson in writing involves more than the making of an assignment and the subsequent marking of the papers. Two or three periods of class time are needed if sufficient preliminary and follow-up instructions are given. First of all, students need help in analyzing subjects, in formulating topic sentences, and in marshalling the ideas, facts, or details relative to the development of the topic. Second, on the day the papers are returned, after teacher marking, a laboratory situation should be maintained in the classroom wherein good student writing is recognized, unsuccessful student writing is analyzed, and difficult problems of diction and structure that appeared in the compositions are solved as an oral class exercise. Finally, after all the corrections and suggestions that might have significance to the class as a whole have been made, each student should begin the revision of his own paper. The amount of class time given for revision would depend upon the reliability of the class to do revision at home as homework.

Another consideration in determining the number of lessons in this minimum core of writing instruction is that these compositions should be carefully marked by the teacher himself, according to the standards set up for the assignment. Although many teachers have worked out devices for getting students to correct or evaluate their own or each other's writing, the success of these devices depends eventually upon the instruction and the correction by the teacher himself of a substantial number of papers--at least the number suggested in the chart as a minimum.

The ability level of students should not affect the number of writing lessons given to them. Student ability would affect, however, the length of the writing assignment, the skills involved, and the nature of the topics.

Composition Length

Some teachers have questioned the practice of stating the number of words a student should be restricted to in any given writing assignment. The number of words is, of course, approximate. However, the indicated length of any composition determines the limiting of the subject, the selection of details, the approach--in short, the whole treatment. Learning to work within the limits of space as well as form is a part of any craftsman's education.

Sources of Topics

For the sake of brevity in the chart, only general areas of subject matter are given. The limiting of the subject matter to a topic suitable for the length of composition assigned takes foresight and skill and is therefore the teacher's responsibility. The further limiting of the topic through the adoption of a viewpoint, or thesis, will be reflected in the thesis sentence or the topic sentence, both of which the student can and should learn to formulate with proper guidance and demonstration.

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*Op. cit.

To insure that every student has a chance to write about something that interests him, a choice of several topics should be given on each assignment. In the selection of topics the teacher should have definite writing problems or patterns in mind so that the preliminary discussion and instruction will take definite direction and result in new or reinforced skills.

Writing Skills to be Taught

Although the chart does not include certain forms of personal or creative writing, such as notes, journals, poems, short stories, and plays, these have their value as enrichment activities for individual students. Such forms should not, however, displace training in the skills that are fundamental to all writing problems involving clear thinking and precise expression. The forms of writing mentioned above may be experimented with by classes, if time allows, after the minimum work with essay-type compositions has been accomplished.

A distinguishing feature of the essay, whether one paragraph in length or many, is that it reveals a point of view. Although an essayist uses the traditional types of discourse--description, narration, exposition, persuasion--in whatever ways his subject matter and purpose suggest, every sentence supports his thesis or objective. Among high school students a particular enemy of good writing has been the over-use of the narrative, a practice that usually results in a mere chronological report: the unstructured relation of incidents or the amorphous account of personal experiences with no clear point of view or synthesis of ideas. Narrative paragraphs that begin with a topic sentence stating the nature of the experience and proceed by means of a careful selection of details building toward the desired impression are, of course, acceptable.

Evaluation

The standards that a teacher has in mind when evaluating a pupil's composition should depend to some extent on the pupil's writing skill at the beginning of the semester and on the nature of the writing instruction given during the semester. The home and community background must also be considered. Non-academic students should not be held to academic standards. On any given level of writing competence, however, all four aspects of composition--ideas, organization, sentence clarity, and conventions--should be given proportionate weight.

Place of Grammar in Relation to Composition

The use made of a language textbook in any class will depend upon the writing skills--or lack of them--revealed in the compositions of the class. The writing should precede the analysis of weaknesses and purposeful drill. Thus the teaching of grammar should accompany composition work but never supplant--in any group--planned, sequential, adequately developed lessons in composition. The greatest measure of improvement in writing seems to be attained when the rules of grammar and rhetoric are discussed in connection with the student's own compositions.

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